Departmental Branch Post Offices has been fixed for the whole country.

There are relaxed norms for opening of post offices in hilly desert and inaccessible areas. Copy of the norm is at Annexure. [*See* Appendix 181, Annexure No. 641.

Mechanisation and Modernisation of Postal Services

2338. DR. B. B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had initiated a plan for mechanisation and modernisation of postal services in the country during the Eighth Five Year Plan.

(b) if so, the extent to which achievements have been made in this regard as on 31st March, 1997; and

(c) the schemes proposed to be taken up during the Ninth Plan period?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) to (c) Modernisation of the postal system by induction of technology was one of the objectives of the 8th Five Year Plan of the Department of Posts. This objective has been achieved to a great extent through introduction of computer based technology in different areas of activities with specific emphasis on counter services.

The programmes of modernising the postal services implemented during the 8th Five Year Plan were intended to provide:—

(a) More efficient and responsive counter services for the customer;

(b) New, value added services to meet the needs of indentified customer groups; and

(c) Modern and clean work environment with better ergonomics to raise employees morale and eliminate drudgery in work.

The specific programmes of mechanisation and modrenisation operationalized for this purpose during the 8th Five Year Plan are:—

— Introduction of computer based multi-purpose counter machines.

— Automatisation of mail processing in important large centres.

—Setting up of very small Aoerture Terminals (VSATs) network for speedy transmission of money orders and provision of other value added services.

— Use of computers for Savings Bank, Postal Life Insurance (PLI) and Speed Post operations.

—Modernisation of the counter services and the front office through upgradation of work environment and improved customer facilities.

— Providing upgraded operational equipments in more important offices to speed up work processes and eliminate drudgery of work.

The extent of achievements in these schemes for mechanisation and modernisatiorn during the 8th Plan period upto 31-3-97 are indicated in the statement.

The Ninth Five Year Plan of the Department of Posts which is yet to be approved by the Planning Commission seeks to expand the scope and coverage of the programmes of mechanisation and modernisation initiated during the Eighth Plan period along with provision of basic postal facilities in areas were these are not available. Development and marketing of new services specially for the

business//professional sectors and modernisation of identified agency functions is an important objective in order to generate greater revenue. Human resource development through appropriate training for skill upgradation, streamlining of management functions, development and maintenance of appropriate building for the modernised systems and staff quarters for the employees are also among the identified priorities of the plan.

Statement

Achievement in Mechanisation and Modernisation Schemes During The Eighth Plan Period

Sl. No.	Name of Scheme	Target 8th Five Year Plan	Achievement as on 31.3.97
1.	*Upgradation of Technology*		
	(a) Installation of Multipurpose counter machines	5000	2660
	(b) Mechanisation of Mail handling	3	2
	(c) Installation of VSAT network	75	74
	(d) Modernisation of Post Offices	No Specific target set	899
	(e) Installation of Track and trace system for Speed Post	"	8
	(f) Electronic Franking Machines	"	40
	(g) Machine made hand cancellors	25000	26000
	(h) Stamp Cancelling Machines	No target set	280
2.	*Postal Life Insurance*		
	(a) Computerisation of PLI work in Circles	11	11
3.	*National Savings*		
	(a) Computerisation of counter operations in Post offices	5HQs	5HQs
	(b) Savings Bank Control Organisation Computerisation.	No target set	252
4.	*Materials Management.*		
	(a) Computerisation of Postal Stores Depots.	46	46

Printing of Telephone Directory on CD-ROM

2339. SHRI TARA CHARAN MAJUMDAR : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the M.T.N.L. proposes to print its telephone directory now on CD-Rom from its ensuing edition;

(b) if so, the special features of the same;

(c) whether Government also propose to print telephone directory of Assam on CD-Rom from its next edition; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?